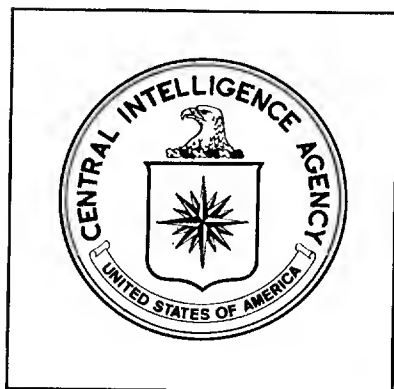


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This publication is prepared by the USSR Division, Office of Regional and Political Analysis, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. The views presented are the personal judgments of analysts on significant events or trends in Soviet foreign and domestic affairs. Although the analysis centers on political matters, it discusses politically relevant economic or strategic trends when appropriate. Differences of opinion are sometimes aired to present consumers with a range of analytical views. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles or to

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Soviet Military Leaders Comment on Detente and Soviet Defense Efforts

The 32nd anniversary of the Allied victory in Europe (May 9) gave the top Soviet military leaders an opportunity to discuss the world situation and the lessons to be derived from the past war. Their statements contained the usual praise for the party's role as "the organizer" of victory, singled out postwar Soviet "initiatives" for world peace, and condemned the Western-inspired "myth of the Soviet threat." They also alleged that the USSR has at its disposal the necessary military means to defend the socialist order.

There were, however, a few significant wrinkles. Defense Minister Ustinov and Chief of the General Staff Ogarkov claimed that the West is seeking one-sided advantages in both the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and the Vienna force reduction negotiations. Marshal Moskalenko, the inspector general for the Soviet armed forces, asserted that the USSR now has the capability to produce any type of new weapon "in the shortest amount of time." Warsaw Pact Commander-in-Chief Kulikov was sidetracked to the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, where his seemingly heavily edited essay focused on the military exploits of past and present generations of Soviet youth, rather than defense issues.

An editorial in *Krasnaya Zvezda* on May 9 set the general tone for the holiday. It paid tribute to the party for having been "the organizer" of the Soviet victory in World War II and cited the USSR's continuing postwar struggle for world peace. The editorial also charged that certain "aggressive imperialistic circles" are whipping up the arms race, attempting to disturb detente, and organizing anti-Soviet campaigns. The editorial concluded that, under such conditions, it is necessary for the USSR to exhibit "tireless concern for strengthening the country's defense capability."

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Ustinov On SALT

Defense Minister Ustinov expressed similar sentiments in his Order of the Day, published in all major Soviet newspapers on May 9, and in his article in *Pravda* on the same day. In the latter, he noted that "the recent talks on SALT in Moscow with the US Secretary of State showed that the American side, despite the agreement previously reached in Vladivostok, is taking a one-sided approach aimed at obtaining advantages for the United States to the detriment of the Soviet Union's security." Ustinov also claimed that the Western countries are adopting "plainly unrealistic positions" at the force reduction talks in Vienna.

After citing a number of "Soviet initiatives" to strengthen peace, Ustinov observed that the party and the Soviet people are devoting the "proper attention" to strengthening the nation's defense capability and are "doing everything to provide our armed forces with the necessary means" to fulfill their responsible tasks. There was no hint of "softness" on support for the continued strengthening of the Soviet armed forces. But Ustinov did not reiterate his earlier claim (*Pravda*, February 23) that strengthening the USSR's defense capability is "a most important function of the socialist state."

Ogarkov Attacks US "Encroachment"

Marshal Ogarkov's essay in *Izvestia* on May 8 noted that the USSR is forced, due to the aggressive actions of the West, "to manifest vigilance and undertake all necessary measures to intensify the security and to strengthen the defense might of the state." Ogarkov added, however, that the Soviet armed forces "now have the most modern combat equipment and possess everything necessary to fulfill the tasks facing them." Earlier in his article, he had observed that it was an alleged Soviet edge in military art during World War II that had enabled the Red Army to win the big battles against the Wehrmacht at Moscow (1941) and Stalingrad (1942), at a time of "approximate parity of forces and equipment with the enemy."

Turning to the March 1977 SALT negotiations, Ogarkov claimed that the US had attempted to "encroach on the

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interests of the Soviet Union." He said that this is "borne out in particular by the attempts to transfer artificially our medium-range bombers to the ranks of strategic arms and at the same time legalize the uncontrolled and unrestricted production of cruise missiles in the United States and thereby open up a dangerous new channel of the arms race." According to Ogarkov, the US desire for one-sided military advantages also may be seen in the failure of its proposals to deal with forward-based nuclear weapons in Europe and Asia, the carrier-based aircraft, and the possession of nuclear weapons by the NATO allies.

Ogarkov added that it also seemed "intolerable" that the Western countries were allegedly "unilaterally building up the numbers of their troops in this region and increasing their military budgets," while at the time conducting the force reduction talks with the Warsaw Pact countries. He ended this part of his essay by insisting that, "as the Soviet government has already frequently stated, our country can hold talks on these vitally important questions only on the basis of equality and equal security."

Moskalenko Lauds Soviet Research and Development Capability

Chief Inspector Moskalenko castigated the attempts of "imperialistic forces" to disrupt detente and insisted that the USSR must solve the tasks of consolidating peace and international security "in organic unity" with the tasks of maintaining the nation's defense and the combat might of the Soviet armed forces "at the level of contemporary demands." His article in *Krasnaya Zvezda* on May 9 pointedly observed that "the achievements of the Soviet economy, science, and technology ensure the potential for creating, when necessary, any type of weapon in an extremely short time." Moskalenko tempered this warning somewhat, however, by adding that the USSR "is constantly proposing that the path of the development of new types of weapons not be traveled."

The Treatment of Kulikov's Article

The public comments of the other top-ranking Soviet military figures also combined expressions of support for the party's "peace program" and detente, satisfaction with the defense effort at present, and concern about the need to ensure that the Soviet armed forces continue to

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be equipped with the material necessary to provide the USSR with an adequate defense. Former chief of the general staff Marshal Kulikov may have been the most "hawkish" on the last point. His article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* on May 9 noted that, although the USSR favors peace and disarmament, "as long as capitalism still hopes to decide its quarrel with socialism by military means, we must have sufficiently powerful armed forces able to crush any aggressor."

This makes the decision to make Kulikov responsible for the VE-Day essay published in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*--a vehicle hardly befitting the first deputy minister of defense commanding the Warsaw Pact armed forces--all the more remarkable. In the past, Warsaw Pact commanders usually have had access to the pages of *Izvestia*, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, or one of the other major Soviet newspapers on VE Day and have been able to use the occasion as an opportunity to discuss the world situation and Soviet defense needs in some detail. Kulikov's VE-Day article this year said nothing, for example, about the danger of war, the prospects for progress at the SALT or force reduction negotiations, or the needs of the Warsaw Pact armed forces. It focused on the exploits of Soviet youth and had more to say about the efforts of the Komsomol members among the construction troops working on the Baikal-Amur railroad than about defense needs.

The content and treatment of Kulikov's article strengthened the impression that he has suffered political reverses during the last year. In addition, the sharp contrast between his VE-Day article and his essay in *Krasnaya Zvezda* on May 14, the 22nd anniversary of the Warsaw Pact, raises questions about who is writing Kulikov's material these days. In the latter article, he echoed the charges raised by Ustinov and Ogarkov concerning the seeking by the West of one-sided advantages at the SALT II and force reduction negotiations, but balanced this by expressing satisfaction with the present strength of the Warsaw Pact armed forces and the programs to increase their strength in the future.

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